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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES \$70,000 IN FUNDS TO LABELLE FIREMEN'S AUXILIARY, INC.

Gregory C. Branum, Missouri State Director for USDA Rural Development, announced the awarding of \$70,000 in funds to the LaBelle Firemen's Auxiliary, Inc. and presented a Mock Check to Donald Zahn, President of the Firemen's Auxiliary in a ceremony September 13, 2006, at the Fire Department.

The \$38,500 grant and \$31,500 loan were used to purchase a tanker truck for the volunteer fire department to serve approximately 3082 residents in their service area.

The LaBelle Firemen's Auxiliary, Inc. was organized as a not-for-profit corporation in April 1996 to provide educational programs, support and assistance to the LaBelle Fire District.



"Our first responders need to have the necessary tools to do the jobs we ask them to do and that's especially true in rural areas," Congressman Kenny Hulshof said. "Rural Development grants are a great example of what the federal government can do to ensure rural communities have the necessary resources. I'm pleased the USDA has recognized the importance of equipment upgrades like this one in LaBelle."

"The new 1999 Volvo chassis with a new tank and pump truck will replace the 1970 outdated pumper truck and should assist the firefighters with improved fire protection service," said Donald Zahn. "The additional size capacity and speed of the newer upgraded model will provide additional fire safety service to their customers in our service area. The financial assistance from Rural Development is very much appreciated."

"This type of assistance mirrors USDA Rural Development's mission and President Bush's initiative of being committed to the future of rural communities," said Branum. "Special thanks are extended to our federal elected officials including U.S. Senators Christopher "Kit" Bond and Jim Talent, along with U.S. Representative Kenny Hulshof for making available federal monies for funding these kinds of projects that provide essential services for the community."

The funds are part of the Community Facilities Program, which provides grants and loans to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns up to 20,000 in population.

Anyone seeking more information about this or any other USDA Rural Development program may visit the homepage at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo/> or by contacting Cheryl Elliott, Rural Development Manager, 17623 Hwy 19, New London, MO, 63459, or by email to Cheryl.Elliott@mo.usda.gov or by calling 573-985-7211 extension 4.

“Committed to the future of rural communities.”

“USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.”

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